

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-5 are all the claims pending in the application.

Claim 1 has been amended. Support for the amendment can be found within the present Application at page 3, line 25.

Claims 1-5 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 2,776,996 to Hunt et al. ("Hunt et al").

Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for the following reasons.

Hunt et al. teach a process for the manufacturing of beta- methylmercapto-propionaldehyde, wherein the acid concentration ranges from 0.05 to 4 moles per mole of base employed or even 10 equivalents per equivalent of base employed (column 2, lines 20-30). However, as disclosed on column 2, line 71 to column 3, line 14, and beginning with "The improvement of this invention is also applicable to continuous commercial production", Hunt insists "The base should be in excess of acetic acid, when the reactants are mixed in continuous operation." According to this, Hunt teaches that a basic compound should be more than 1 mol per mol of the acidic compound in a continuous process.

The present invention, as defined by amended Claim 1, is a method for producing a 3-methylthiopropional in a continuous manner, the basic compound being used in an amount of about 0.3 mol or less per mol of the acidic compound. Thus, as amended, Claim 1 of the present application is novel over Hunt.

Also, although Hunt teaches a process for the manufacturing of beta-methylmercapto-propionaldehyde, wherein the acid concentration ranges from 0.05 to 4 moles per mole of base

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employed or even 10 equivalents per equivalent of base employed (column 2, lines 20-30), Hunt explicitly distinguishes continuous commercial production and insists that the base should be in excess of acetic acid when the reactants are mixed in a continuous operation. Thus, Claim 1 of the present application is also not obvious from the teachings of Hunt et al.

Further, Applicants submit that because the remaining claims (2-6) of the present application are dependent upon Claim 1 that is novel and nonobvious, these dependent claims are also novel and nonobvious.

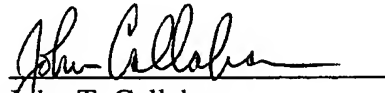
Claim 3 has also been rejected as being anticipated by GB 1,166,961. However, the broader Claims 1 and 2 have not been rejected as being anticipated by GB 1,166,961. Because GB 1,166,961 does not teach the present Claim 1 as amended above, Claim 3 depending on Claim 1 is not anticipated by GB 1,166,961

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

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The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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**23373**

CUSTOMER NUMBER

Date: April 5, 2005